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## Air Force Forbids Gifts of Cigarettes For Its Hospitals

By JACK RAYMOND

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WASHINGTON, Oct. 6—The Air Force Surgeon General's office has ordered Air Force hospitals and clinics to stop distributing free cigarettes to patients.

A similar prohibition has been ordered on the inclusion of cigarettes in the packaged lunches that are prepared for service personnel on long flights.

Maj. Gen. R. L. Bohannon, the deputy Surgeon General, said in a strongly worded directive that the "ever-increasing evidence" of a link between cigarette smoking and cancer and certain other diseases "no longer can be ignored."

The order was distributed to "all major air commands." Welfare groups and cigarette companies have also been told that gift offerings of the cigarettes can no longer be accepted.

The Surgeon General's directive and a circular letter to cigarette donors were dated Sept. 17 and became known today.

### Endorsed by Kennedy

They appear to be the first direct action against cigarette smoking by any agency of the

Government. The Public Health Service has argued for years, however, that there is evidence of a link between cigarette smoking and certain diseases.

An Army spokesman said that the Army had not taken similar action against cigarette smoking. Nor has the Navy or Marine Corps taken action.

President Kennedy said at a news conference last May that he would take a personal interest in studies of any relationship between smoking and cancer. In June, Surgeon General Luther L. Terry announced that he would appoint a 12-man board of inquiry.

The President endorsed the idea and said that it would engage in a painstaking and lengthy investigation that would "go into '63."

The names of the members of the board have not yet been announced, however.

Earlier, in March, a report by the British Royal College of Physicians said that "cigarette smoking is a cause of lung cancer."

The Air Force directive by General Bohannon was toughly worded in putting an end to the distribution of free cigarettes that customarily have been given to hospital patients.

"The ever-increasing evidence linking cigarette smoking with lung cancer, pulmonary diseases, cardiovascular diseases, etc., can no longer be ignored," he said, continuing:

"The Surgeon General, United States Air Force, has taken a

firm stand on this issue and has informed tobacco companies that gift cigarettes are no longer acceptable."

The directive went on to explain:

"To allow the free distribution of cigarettes in our hospitals and in flight lunches suggests to our personnel that the Air Force Medical Service, in effect, condones cigarette smoking."

"To do so is to repudiate the overwhelming evidence of many medical research teams working independently on a worldwide basis."

The directive concluded:

"Henceforth, gift cigarettes will not be accepted for free distribution to patients in United States Air Force hospitals, nor will they be placed in flight lunch boxes."

At the same time that the order was distributed to all major air commands, Brig. Gen. R. T. Jenkins of the Air Force Medical Corps, sent out a circular letter to welfare groups, cigarette companies and other donors of free cigarettes.

"We regret that we will not be able to accept your gift offerings of cigarettes for free distribution in Air Force hospitals," General Jenkins wrote. The letter said:

"Should additional studies, including those being conducted by the United States Public Health Service and educational institutes, fail to substantiate the recent claims that cigarette smoking is a causative factor in these diseases, we will gladly reconsider our position."

General Jenkins closed his letter with an expression of thanks for past gifts.

An Air Force spokesman said that he was unaware of any specific event that prompted the Air Force Surgeon General to issue the directive. The spokesman said that virtually all major cigarette companies had participated in the free distribution of cigarettes to service hospital patients.

The Surgeon General, United States Air Force, is obliged to decline your offer because of the recent evidence which suggests further relation between cigarette smoking and lung cancer, other pulmonary diseases and with certain cardiovascular diseases.

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## Action Against Cigarettes

The Air Force has become the first United States Government agency to take definite action to try to discourage cigarette smoking and the Navy has indicated it will follow suit. No ban has been placed on smoking as such and Air Force personnel are still free to buy their own cigarettes and smoke as much as they please. But the distribution of free cigarettes to patients in Air Force hospitals and clinics has been halted, as has been the inclusion of cigarettes in packaged lunches for personnel on long flights.

The directive issued by the Air Force Surgeon General's office asserts: "The ever-increasing evidence linking cigarette smoking with lung cancer, pulmonary diseases, cardiovascular diseases, etc., can no longer be ignored."

The scientific debate over this question is still not ended, and a few months ago the United States Public Health Service announced it was inquiring into the matter. The results of its investigation are awaited with interest and impatience. Meanwhile, the high probability that immoderate smoking of cigarettes can and does have injurious effects warrants such moves as those of the Air Force to discourage the cigarette habit by means short of prohibition.

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### DAILY NEWS

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## THOSE USAF CIGARETS

The U. S. Air Force's Surgeon General stops distribution of gift cigarettes in USAF hospitals, saying there is "ever-increasing evidence linking cigaret smoking with lung cancer, pulmonary diseases, cardiovascular diseases, etc."

Ignored are the facts that there is no laboratory proof of this charge (it depends on statistics only), and that the great majority of heavy cigaret smokers don't get lung cancer.

Where do we go from here? To cutting out potatoes, bread, spaghetti, cream and sugar in USAF messes because these foods occasionally make people dangerously overweight? To denying the boys an occasional shot of bourbon, scotch, gin, vodka or beer because some people can't safely drink anything with alcohol in it?

Then, what do we do for fighting fliers if USAF recruiting goes into a serious decline because American men don't want their personal habits policed by old ladies in uniform?